

(Strictly Private and Confidential.)

DEFENCE OF CANADA.

- 1st. General Character of Country—Strength of Militia—Lake District from Lake Superior downwards to the Falls of Niagara.
- 2nd. The District round Lake Ontario downwards to Ogdensburg, and the points on the American shore.
- 3rd. The District from Ogdensburg to Montreal, including the country between Lake Champlain and Montreal,—and the American position at Rouse's Point.
- 4th. The route from the Ocean to Quebec—the means of Inland Communication by the Canals and Railways to the West—and the importance of a thoroughly organized system for the defence of the works.
- 5th. The importance of obtaining command of the Upper Lakes—the number of American and British vessels;—and certain practical suggestions.

1st. General Character of Country.—Strength of Militia—Lake District from Lake Superior downwards to the Falls of Niagara.

The following observations have for object, to place the proper authorities in possession of such information, as accidental circumstances have put it in the power of the writer to collect. It has occurred to him that some of them might be useful in the present emergency. He does not presume to offer any opinion on the military tactics which should be followed, and if he has been betrayed into doing so, it is because the expression of it is unavoidable to a right understanding of his meaning.

If the opportunity he has had of making himself acquainted with the Topography of the Country and its internal means of communication, enables him to bring out any fact which may be made useful for its military defence, the end which the writer has in view is attained.

The position of Canada is altogether exceptional. The inhabited portion is a narrow strip of land stretching from the West of Lake Superior, one thousand six hundred miles to the Atlantic,—bordering on a hostile territory, divided from that territory for upwards of one thousand miles by navigable waters, and for most of the remaining distance by an imaginary line only.

The means of communication through Canada are chiefly on the American Frontier. The Public Works were constructed entirely without reference to military considerations,—their location in the first instance having been chosen with the double object of facilitating intercourse through the Province and of connecting with the avenues of trade in the United States. Any interruption in time of war would be productive of the most serious consequences. It is therefore specially important that the means available for their defence,—small indeed by comparison with the resources of the United States,—should be husbanded, and that every man should be placed where his services will be most effective.

From the head of Lake Superior to Collingwood, a point on Lake Huron at the south-easterly end of Georgian Bay, no risk of attack need be apprehended. The country is wild and roadless. But on Lake Huron there are certain places at which a landing might be effected.

From the place just named,—Collingwood,—to the City of Quebec, a distance, by the circuitous route water, estimated at nearly one thousand miles, the country is at certain points exposed to attack. For its defence, great reliance must be placed on the militia of the country. The Imperial force is small and can be but inadequately augmented until the Spring.

The population of Canada by the census of last year was 2,501,370. In 1858 the strength of the Sedentary Militia was

IN UPPER CANADA.

1st class service men—18 years to 45—single.....	51,086
2nd “ “ “ “ “ married.....	56,027
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Reserve men, (45 to 60) 33,298.	107,113

IN LOWER CANADA.

1st class service men—18 to 45—single.....	31,157
2nd “ “ “ “ “ married.....	51,641
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Reserve men, (45 to 60) 33,340.	82,798
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Total reserve, 66,638	

Officers and Sergeants.....	19,878
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Total service men exclusive of Reserves.....	209,789

What number of this nominal return could be brought into the field, the writer does not venture to say; but from the loyalty and spirit which all classes now display to rally in defence of the country, a larger proportion than usual may be relied on.

The present Active force (included in the above) which is already organised, armed and drilled consisting of seven batteries of Artillery, a number of Troops of Cavalry and Companies of Rifles, amounts to 339 Officers, 4949 non-commissioned Officers and men, and 1487 horses. This force is thoroughly efficient. The numbers both of the Sedentary Militia and Active force, are probably now somewhat in excess of the return given above,—being for the year 1858.

Proceeding then to enumerate the points on the Frontier from the Georgian Bay, which are exposed to attack:

The first is Collingwood, where there is a good harbour and railway communication across the Peninsula to Toronto on Lake Ontario, the distance being under 100 miles. The intermediate country however is thickly wooded, the ordinary roads by no means good, and any advancing force would have the most serious difficulties to contend with. The next point possessing an available harbour is Goderich, to which there is also a railway which connects with the various other lines running through the Peninsula of Upper Canada. The last is Sarnia, 65 miles further down the coast, and here the Grand Trunk Railway and a branch of the Great Western have their respective Termini. The country around both Goderich and Sarnia, and for a good many miles inland, is also thickly wooded and the ordinary roads are indifferent.

Following the coast downwards from Sarnia, by the river St. Clair, and the small lake of the same name, the next harbour is at the mouth of the River Thames, which is navigable to the town of Chatham, seventeen miles upwards. Chatham is connected by rail with London and the other towns on the Canadian Peninsula; the country around is flat, and the roads are of a fair description. The next points, distant about forty miles from Chatham, are Windsor and Sandwich, directly opposite the American city of Detroit, from which they are divided only by the river of that name, and which is less than a mile wide. Lake Erie is entered at this point. There are but few available harbours on the Western end of the north shores of this lake; the country on its borders, except at the places to which allusion will be made, would be difficult to traverse, and there are railways only at a few points.

The first point is Amherstburg, at the mouth of the River Detroit, where there are Barracks and a small garrison. The next is Two Creeks, a dangerous landing place, and suitable only for small vessels,—the next, Rondeau, to which the same observations apply. The next point, about forty miles farther on, is Port Stanley, where there is a fair harbour and where a railroad terminates, which connects at London, twenty-four miles distant, with the Great Western and Grand Trunk lines. The next

harbours are Port Dover and Port Burwell, around which the roads to the interior are better, and the country more settled—next come Port Maitland and Dunnville, at the upper entrance of the Welland Canal, and further on is Port Colborne, the main entrance of the same work. The harbour here is suitable for vessels of the largest burthen. It is distant less than twenty-five miles from Buffalo, and the position is of the first importance. The Welland Canal connects Lake Erie with Lake Ontario. Its size, capabilities and advantages of position will be more fully noticed hereafter. Port Erie, opposite Buffalo, and Chippewa terminate the list of noticeable points to the Falls of Niagara. They are both connected by rail and good roads with the interior.

The great points on the American shores are Port Huron, Detroit, Toledo, Sandusky, Cleveland, Erie, Dunkirk and Buffalo. These cities are connected with the whole chain of railways throughout the Western and North-Western States of the Union, and munitions of war can be brought to them with the greatest ease and expedition.

The great bulk of the shipping, however, on the Upper Lakes, is owned at or resorts to the cities of Chicago and Milwaukee, on Lake Michigan. It would of course be important to confine these vessels within Lake Michigan, which is wholly in American Territory. The seizure of a position, such as Bois Blanc Island, at the Straits of Mackinaw, a narrow channel, where Lake Michigan joins Lake Huron, or the stationing of a force of gun-boats there, would accomplish that object, and diminish the risk of attack on the shores as well of Lake Huron as Lake Erie.

2nd. The District round Lake Ontario downwards to Ogdensburg and the points on the American shore.

The chief towns of Western Canada are situated on the North Shore of this Lake. They are Hamilton, Toronto, Port Hope, Cobourg, Belleville, on the Bay of Quinté; Kingston, Brockville and Prescott. They all possess good harbours, and are generally suitable for the largest class of vessels navigating the lakes.

Besides these points there are the intermediate ports of Niagara, where the river of that name falls into Lake Ontario. The river, which here divides Canada from the United States, is only about yards wide. Port Dalhousie, the entrance on Lake Ontario to the eastern end of the Welland Canal,—Grimsby,—Wellington Square,—Oakville,—Port Credit,—Oshawa,—Colborne,—and Presqu' Isle, are all safe landing places, and are connected with the interior by good roads. Below Kingston, on the River St. Lawrence, to the point opposite Cornwall, where the stream ceases to be the boundary between Canada and the United States, there are numerous landing places on the Canada side.

It is important in connection with the suggestions hereafter offered as to the obtaining command of Lake Ontario, to note the position of the American places on the South side of this lake, to which the enemy could bring up the necessary means for a hostile expedition. They are practically but six in number, viz:—

- 1st. Lewiston or Niagara, already mentioned, at the mouth of that river.
- 2nd. Rochester or Charlotte, at the mouth of the Genesee River.
- 3rd. Oswego, on the river of that name, and Sodus Bay, a small harbour adjoining it.
- 4th. Sackett's Harbour and Watertown, both on the same Bay.
- 5th. Cape Vincent, opposite Kingston, and
- 6th. Ogdensburg, more properly on the River St. Lawrence, opposite Prescott.

These are the only towns which are connected by rail or water with the Interior of the country, and, indeed the only places at which materials for an expeditionary force could be accumulated, or from which it could embark. If these places can be sealed up, the danger to Canada is very much diminished, not only as respects a direct landing on the adjoining region, but as preventing the descent by water of any force to co-operate in a combined attack on Montreal.

It is needless to advert to the circumstances which make Kingston a position of so much importance. It commands the entrance of the Rideau Canal, on which, it is possible, dependence for the conveyance of supplies may in a great degree have to be placed. It commands in some measure the entrance to Lake Ontario. It has also a dockyard and excellent harbour, and is so fortified that it cannot be reduced except by the operations of a regular siege. The Rideau Canal connects at Kingston Mills with the Grand Trunk Railway and if the communications along the Frontier were menaced, supplies sent up by the Ottawa River and Rideau Canal might be transhipped at that point for the Western Section of the Province.

3rd. The District from Ogdensburg to Montreal, including the country between Lake Champlain and Montreal,—and the American position at Rouse's Point.

The important position of Montreal will at once be seen by reference to the map. Apart from its being the largest and most populous city in British America, it is the point at which all the channels of communication with the entire Western Section of the Province terminate, and through which supplies of every description must of necessity pass. There is neither rail nor navigable river in the rear, and the ordinary roads of the country are of the worst description. No supplies or munitions of war can reach Upper Canada but in one of three ways, either: 1st. through the Canal between Montreal and Lachine and thence by water up the various other canals on the St. Lawrence; 2nd. by rail from Montreal direct to Upper Canada; or 3rd. up the Ottawa river, by small steamers to Ottawa city and thence through the Rideau Canal to Kingston,—the point of departure in the latter case still being Montreal.

It will also be seen that the city is open to attack by a force from two points;—Lake Champlain on the one side, and on the other by a force descending from Ogdensburg or marching from the frontier on the borders of the County of Huntingdon to the River St. Lawrence near Beauharnois, Chateauguay or Sault St. Lewis.

At Rouse's Point the Americans have constructed a strong Fort (Fort Montgomery), which effectually commands the channel leading into Lake Champlain. The works at this Fort are not yet entirely completed, nor are the guns in position, but it is believed a few weeks would serve to put it in a fair condition of defence. It is intended for 65 guns in position, and 25 en barbette. This point is distant but 45 miles from Montreal,—the intervening country is almost entirely cleared and is a dead level. There is communication by railway, and the ordinary roads are tolerably good. Lake Champlain, stretches into the interior of the State of New York for nearly 100 miles, and is connected by a canal from Whitehall, its Southern extremity, with the Hudson River at Albany, from which city there is continuous navigation to New York for small sailing vessels and river steamers of the largest class. There are, besides, several lines of railway terminating at Rouse's Point and at other places on the Lake, which connect with Boston, New York, and all the populous cities in the States of Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, Vermont and Connecticut. It will thus be seen that with the best water communication in the rear, and so many railways terminating at this point, a large force might with ease be collected under protection of the fortification within 45 miles of Montreal with a level country intervening. What difficulties a hostile force, supposing it to have reached the St. Lawrence opposite Montreal, would encounter in crossing, or how far the city would be at their command if they effected a lodgement there, are points on which no opinion is offered.

Another force might be collected at Fort Covington, Malone, Moers, or the other towns on the borders of the County of Huntingdon. The country except at one point for about ten miles from the frontier is cleared and well settled, and with the exception of a number of ravines at places where various small streams connect with the Chateauguay River, is level to the point of confluence of that river and the St. Lawrence. A march was attempted by the American army by this road during the last war, but the Country then was a dense forest and far more defensible than now. The distance from Moers to the St. Lawrence at Sault St. Louis opposite Lachine is little over 20 miles; the distance from the other Points on the Province line to Chateauguay or Beauharnois is between 30 or 40 miles.

A third force, if the enemy obtain command of the Lakes and River, might be collected and descend by water from Ogdensburg and choose its own point of landing on the Island of Montreal near Point St. Clair or Lachine,—the means of transport which they used in the descent, being available for the crossing of the other force from Beauharnois, Chateauguay, or Sault St. Louis.

4th. The Route from the Ocean to Quebec—the means of Inland Communication by the Canals and Railways to the West;—and the importance of a thoroughly organized system for the defence of the works.

In the absence of railway communication the only, or at least the most practicable, route is by St. John's New Brunswick up the river of that name, to Fredericton and Woodstock—thence to the Province line and thence across to Rivière du Loup. There are good roads to Grand Falls; the distance thence to Rivière du Loup is upwards of 110 miles, and though the road has been considerably improved by the Province of late years, it runs chiefly through the Forest, and the means of transport and housing are very limited. A thorough system of transport could, however, be speedily organized; small houses or shanties, at

short intervals, should be built in the forest, which might be done in a few days by gangs of lumbermen accustomed to the work, and supplies of provisions could be distributed along the line so as to lighten the commissariat required to accompany the force. From Rivière du Loup, on the St. Lawrence, one hundred and twenty miles below Quebec, there is railway communication to the west of Canada. The Line of Telegraph should at once be completed through British Territory to Halifax.

But one of the most serious dangers to which the Province is liable is the destruction of any one of the links which form the entire chain of its inland communication from Quebec westwards. And to this danger it is peculiarly exposed, both from the proximity of the works to the Frontier, and from the character of the works themselves.

The following statement exhibits the capacity of the respective works :

1st. From the Sea to Lake Ontario by the St. Lawrence Canals, vessels can pass

186 feet in Length.

43½ feet Beam.

9 feet Draught.

2nd. From Lake Ontario to Lake Erie by the Welland Canal,

142 feet in Length.

26 feet in Width.

10 feet Draught.

3rd. From Montreal to Lake Ontario by the Ottawa and Rideau Canals,

100 feet in Length.

19 feet Beam.

5 to 5½ feet Draught.

4th. From the River St. Lawrence to Lake Champlain,

113 feet in Length.

22½ feet Beam.

6½ feet Draught.

Thus the largest vessels that can pass from the sea to Lake Erie and the waters west of it are 142 feet in length, 26 feet beam, 9 feet draft.

The accompanying tracing exhibits the location of the various sections of these Canals and the lines of Railway. The destruction of a Lock or the breach of a bank at certain points might involve an interruption of the entire chain from Montreal upwards, and render the transport of troops, provisions, and materials almost impossible. The line of operations being extended over so long a line of narrow country, with the means of communication all centered on the frontier, the consequence of interruption would be more than usually disastrous. A well organized and efficient force should at once be detailed for the service of protecting these works. The Lockmen and ordinary labourers if armed would form a valuable auxiliary. The work peculiarly exposed is the Cornwall Canal. This work is mainly on the banks of the river St. Lawrence and, at certain places, particularly at a place called Barnhart's Island, is within gunshot of the American shore. It is raised a considerable height above the river and the blowing up of a lock or a slight breach in the bank on a long level—which could be effected by a few men with pickaxes and shovels in a night—might create such destruction as would take many weeks or even months to repair, even were the operations not to be impeded by a hostile force. The Beauharnois Canal, the smaller Canals at Farrens Point, Rapides Plats, and Gallopes are all likewise exposed.

The Rideau Canal, though running through the interior of the country, ought not to be left without protection of a like kind, for its embankments and artificial works, at certain places, are of a nature that peculiarly expose it to destruction. Its entrance on Lake Ontario, as already mentioned, is protected by Kingston.

The protection of the Chambly Canal connecting Lake Champlain with the St. Lawrence, via the River Richelieu, is also important.

The Welland Canal, which connects Lake Erie with Lake Ontario is one of the most important channels of communication in the Province. The command of this work is essential. English gunboats and vessels may be moved from one lake to the other as occasion requires, while the American vessels must not only remain in the waters where they at present happen to be wintering, but all communication, except for friendly vessels, would be impossible. Full information as to the points where the works are most exposed, and the best localities for stationing a force for their protection, can be obtained from the Office of Public Works of Canada,—an officer from the department having examined the works with that object during the last spring.

The protection of the arterial lines of railway from the Eastern Terminus of the Grand Trunk at Rivière du Loup to its Western at Sarnia, and the auxiliary lines which form the road-way throughout the Province, is hardly secondary to that of the Canals. To defend a frontier so extended and with so small an available force, it is essential that the most rapid means of transport and communication should exist.

The same dangers to which the canals are exposed, also threaten the main Line of Railway. It borders on the St. Lawrence from Montreal to Toronto, and at certain points, important bridges, viaducts, &c. might be easily destroyed. In order to keep the land communication by Railway open from Quebec to Montreal, as well as for the defence of the District known as the Eastern Townships bordering on the States of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, the Frontier around Sherbrooke it is believed possesses strategic advantages. The line of the Grand Trunk Railway should be guarded from the Frontier near Island Pond to its termination at the Victoria Bridge. The employés on the line, if armed, would form a valuable guard, and with supports at intervals, the risk of destruction from any sudden incursion would be avoided.

5th. The importance of obtaining command of the Upper Lakes,—the number of American and British Vessels,—and certain practical suggestions.

It is manifest that the command of Lakes Ontario and Erie, are matters of the most vital importance. Whether it be possible for England to secure the command of both, or whether the whole force should not be concentrated in one Lake so that it could be securely held, are questions of serious concern. The total number and tonnage of American and British vessels on both lakes, according to a return recently made, was in 1859 as follows:—

UNITED STATES.		No. of Vessels.	Tonnage.	Total Tonnage.
Lake Steamers,.....	41	.....	39,477	
River Steamers,.....	16	.....	2,324	
Tugs (Side Wheel), River,	9	.....	1,825	
Ferry Boats (Side Wheel),	2	.....	122	
Lake Propellers,.....	105	.....	53,749	
River Propellers,	7	.....	550	
Lake Tugs (Propellers),.....	35	.....	4,347	
River Tugs (Propellers),	31	.....	1,722	
Ferry Boats (Propellers),	2	.....	568	
			104684,	
Barques,	43	.....	17,515	
Brigs,.....	79	.....	22,860	
Schooners,.....	832	.....	174,258	
Sloops,	4	.....	152	214,785
American Vessels,.....		1,206	Tonnage,	319,469
CANADIAN.				
Lake Steamers,.....	22	.....	10,188	
River Steamers,.....	25	.....	7,859	
River Tugs (Side Wheel),.....	12	.....	3,322	
Ferry Boats (Side Wheel),.....	3	.....	2,288	
Lake Propellers,.....	14	.....	4,285	
Lake Tugs (Propellers),	3	.....	357	
River Tugs (Propellers),.....	3	.....	117	
			28,416	
Barques,.....	18	.....	5,946	
Brigs,.....	15	.....	3,630	
Schooners,.....	210	.....	32,498	
Sloops,	4	.....	244	42,318
Canadian Vessels,.....		329	Tonnage,	70,734
Grand Total,.....		1,535		390,203

Many of these vessels belonging to both countries are unsuited for armament but others could readily be adapted for service. By far the greatest proportion of the American vessels are on Lakes Erie and Michigan, and a large number cannot pass through the Welland Canal at all. It is estimated that one fourth of all the American vessels, and three fourths of the Propellers (the most serviceable class) are too large to pass. The preponderance of vessels and tonnage against Canada is by no means so great on Lake Ontario as on Lake Erie, and it is an important circumstance that a large proportion of the Lake Ontario vessels that can pass through the Canal, winter in the Upper Lakes, for the sake of obtaining the first cargo downwards on the opening of the navigation. If, as already suggested, the MacInaw Straits could be commanded, a very large proportion would be locked up in Lake Michigan, and those in Lakes Erie and Huron would of course be stopped from passing through the Welland Canal into Lake Ontario. It is not therefore unreasonable to assume that Canada is much more able to cope with the United States for the mastery of Lake Ontario than of Lake Erie.

It is however, all important that a supply of Gunboats should be sent. The passage of these vessels upwards, might however, be greatly retarded if not wholly prevented, and it is highly desirable that the construction of a number should be begun at once in Canada. The shipyards at Kingston, Toronto, St. Catharines and other places on the Upper waters would produce a fair complement in a few months, while at Quebec, Montreal, and Sorel there are facilities for building any number with the greatest expedition. A number of engines could be manufactured in the country, and the remainder as well as the armament of the whole might be sent from England and conveyed upwards by Rail, in case the navigation should be interrupted by a hostile force. A supply of men trained and capable of instructing others in marine gunnery should be sent in the winter.

It will be obvious that if the works at Rouse's Point could be taken and command be obtained of Lake Champlain, the risk of attack from that quarter also is at an end. Whether the Fort could be attacked with any prospect of success, the writer does not venture to hazard an opinion, but if it were destroyed or could be taken, it is confidently believed that a small force of gunboats could be thrown on Lake Champlain, which would effectually command it and prevent the assembling at any point on its shores of any expeditionary force of sufficient magnitude to cause apprehension. The works at Isle aux Noix, on the Richelieu River, equidistant from the American Fort at Rouse's Point and the town of St. John's, which were formerly used as a defensive position by England, but which were given up to the Provincial Government and have lately been applied to other purposes, might be expeditiously restored, and might until reduced, offer a serious check to any advancing Force. This point is accessible by water from the St. Lawrence, and the Railway communication at present existing direct with Montreal, could in a few weeks be extended to the Island itself.

The command of Lake Ontario would not only free that region of country on its Northern shores from all risk of attack, and leave the force, which otherwise would be required there, available for other service, but it would lessen the risk of any attack on Montreal, by preventing the co-operation of any force, which might otherwise assemble at Ogdensburg, and descend the St. Lawrence from that place. Without the transport which such a force would have at its command and convey down the river, any co-operating division which might debouche at Chateauguay, Beauharnois or Sault St. Louis, would be crippled for means to cross from those points to the Island of Montreal, and thus that city would require to be guarded in force but from an attack in the direction of Rouse's Point.

No observations have been offered on the character of the country leading to or in the neighbourhood of Quebec. It is quite manifest that with the command of the Ocean, no attack need be apprehended seaward. The march of any army from the frontiers of Maine or New Hampshire to Quebec, would be attended with difficulties of no ordinary magnitude, and Montreal must be reduced before an attack from that quarter can take place. It is, therefore, assumed that until the whole of the western country is in the power of a hostile force, Quebec is safe from assault.